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stances nothing, he sees in the poverty of those who fall by the way, not a misfortune to be pitied and relieved, but a moral failing to be condemned, and in riches, not an object of suspicion—though like other gifts they may be abused—but the blessing which rewards the triumph of energy and will. Tempered by self-examination, self-discipline, self-control, he is the practical ascetic, whose victories are won not in the cloister, but on the battlefield, in the counting-house, and in the market.

This temper, of course with infinite varieties of quality and emphasis, found its social organ in those middle and commercial classes who were the citadel of the Puritan spirit, and whom, "ennobled by their own industry and virtue," Milton described as the standard-bearers of progress and enlightenment. We are so accustomed to think of England as *par excellence* the pioneer of economic progress, that we are apt to forget how recently that rôle has been assumed. In the Middle Ages it belonged to the Italians, in the sixteenth century to the Netherland dominions of the Spanish Empire, in the seventeenth to the United Provinces, and, above all, to the Dutch. -<

The England of Shakespeare and Bacon was still largely mediaeval in its economic organization and social outlook, more interested in maintaining

customary
standards of consumption than in
accumulating capital
for future production, with an aristocracy
contemptuous
of the economic virtues, a peasantry farming
for sub-
sistence amid the organized confusion of the
open-field
village, and a small, if growing, body of
jealously
conservative craftsmen. In such a society
Puritanism
worked like the yeast which sets the whole
mass
fermenting. It went through its slack and
loosely
knit texture like a troop of Cromwell's
Ironsides through
the disorderly cavalry of Rupert. Where, as
in Ireland,
the elements were so alien that
assimilation was out
of the question, the result was a wound
that festered